

Colonization of America

SOL 5a - The student will demonstrate knowledge of the factors that shaped colonial America by describing the religious and economic events and conditions that led to the colonization of America.

As the European explorers claimed the vast lands of North America, they began to establish permanent colonies. Some colonies were established for **economic reasons** and some colonies were established for **religious reasons**.

The first English colony to be established in the New World was on the island of Roanoke just off the coast of present day North Carolina. England established the **Roanoke Island** colony for economic reasons. They wanted to expand trade and increase the nation's wealth. This colony, however, was plagued by shortages of supplies and unfriendly Indians. England's hopes for this new settlement ended in 1590 when ships carrying supplies from England arrived to find the colony abandoned and the settlers missing. Four hundred years later, historians still do not agree on what really happened to this "Lost Colony."

England's next attempt at establishing a colony in 1607 was successful. **Jamestown Settlement** became the first permanent English settlement in North America. Jamestown was also established for economic reasons. A group of businessmen called the Virginia Company was granted approval by King James I to settle the new lands across the Atlantic

The next successful English colony was **Plymouth Colony**. It was founded by a group of people called the **Pilgrims** in 1620. They were also called **separatists** because they wanted to be *separate* from the Church of England. Being separate meant being disobedient to the king, so to avoid religious persecution, they decided to leave England in search of a safe place to practice their religion. They set sail for America on a ship called the *Mayflower* and landed on the shores of what is now the state of Massachusetts.

Ten years later a religious group called the **Puritans** left England for America and settled the **Massachusetts Bay Colony**. Unlike the Pilgrims, they did not want to be separate from the Church of England. Instead they tried for many years to change it. When they finally realized that change was not taking place, they too began to look across the ocean for a safe place to practice their religion. Like the Pilgrims before them, they settled in what is now the state of Massachusetts.

About fifty years later in the 1680s, the colony of **Pennsylvania** was settled by a group of people called **Quakers**. The Quakers, led by William Penn were not well liked in England and like the Pilgrims and the Puritans, they set sail across the ocean looking for a safe place to practice their religion without interference.

The last American colony called **Georgia** was founded almost forty years later in 1733. It was settled by people who had been imprisoned in England for not paying their debts. They came to the New World with hopes of economic freedom and a new life.

